

The Annin-Smalley House  
Valley Road - West of Stone Bridge  
Bernards Township, Somerset County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-240

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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The Annin-Smalley House  
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Owner: The Century Corporation (W. B. Self)

Date of Erection: Late eighteenth century and  
about 1830

Architect:

Builder: William Cross or William C. Annin with  
extension by Andrew Smalley

Present Condition: Very good

Number of Stories: One and one-half

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - timber  
frame, clapboards

Interior walls - plaster  
on studding

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - wood shingles

Historical Data:

By a deed of 25 February 1819, William C. Annin and wife Phebe of Bernards Township, Somerset County, conveyed to Andrew Smalley of same place, for \$762.50, a  $12\frac{1}{4}$  acre tract there, having a frontage of 640 feet on the lower side of what is now known as Valley Road, some 1300 feet west of its intersection with the Kings Road where the stone house (NJ-247)

stands. The group of houses at this intersection is named Stone Bridge on the road map. The origin of Annin's title does not appear, but the tract may have been part of the estate of William Cross who died 15 April 1812 in the 55th year and is buried in the nearby Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church yard.

By a deed of 19 June 1847, Andrew Smalley abovesaid and wife Anna conveyed the property to James K. Cook, who by his deed of 12 January 1848 conveyed it to Lucius Biglow of Brooklyn, and he in turn with wife Susan being then of Bernards Township and supposedly residing in this house conveyed it by deed of 1st of March 1865 to Robert Meyer of Morris Township and County, New Jersey. Meyer and his wife Dorothea of New York City conveyed by their deed of 24 June 1868 to Oliver R. Stelle of Bernards Township abovesaid, who by his deed of 29 August 1868 conveyed the same to the Millington Baptist Meeting. On the map of Bernards Township published in Beer's gazetteer of Somerset County in 1873, the house here considered is indicated and marked as Baptist Parsonage.

The trustees of the Baptist Meeting at Millington by their deed of 13 August 1884 conveyed to George Carr, and by deed of 15 November 1928 Eliza M. Carr of Bernards Township, widow and heiress of said George Carr conveyed the property to the Century Corporation (W. B. Self).

#### Architectural Analysis:

This unimposing homestead is found to be a composite of two or more periods of construction. Its first floor plan decidedly informal is an aggregation of three large rooms en suite behind five lesser ones across the front all within a

rectangle of  $26\frac{1}{2}$  feet depth by 48 feet length. The central front entrance vestibule serves only the sitting room behind it and the box stairway to the garret story above. It is evident that the two parlors, front and rear, which form the east end of the house were an addition made in the Greek Revival period of 1815-1850, the design and details of the interior finishing woodwork being examples of that style during which time Andrew Smalley owned the place. These two rooms being on a floor line three steps elevated above that of the rest of the house and having a ceiling height of 8 feet 4 inches instead of but some 7 feet as elsewhere, together with the fact that they are over the only part of the foundation of the house which is excavated to cellar depth, are thus plainly not of contemporary construction with the minor part of this house. At the time of this eastward extension, the entire exterior was changed by the insertion of a ridge-high gable on the center of the front wall to provide a triple window in the newly partitioned garret, and two so-called "belly windows" were introduced under the low eaves of the rear elevation for the same purpose. Apparently too, all of the window frames of the first floor were replaced at that time by ones of uniform size, and the two sash of but two large panes each are evidence of the later date of this change. The most interesting room in this house and evidently the oldest is the kitchen which forms a lesser wing at right angles with the rear of the older section, being some 12 by  $19\frac{1}{2}$  feet outside dimensions. The center of its outer gable end is occupied by a fireplace of brick, at the loft side of which projects a great oven of two superimposed chambers of the same material, which extends to the 6 feet 5 inches ceiling. Remarkable also here is the wainscot composed of two boards applied lengthwise, the old windows of two sash containing six lights in each, as well as the fine strap hinges of handwrought iron-work on rear entrance door. The gable roof of this kitchen has curiously not been extended to miter

into the roof of the main house, but has both its gable ends exposed. An unexpectedly beautiful front entrance "stoep", composed of two colonnettes of 5 inch diameter set 5 feet 3 inches apart on centers and 3 feet 2 inches in front of the corresponding pilasters at the house line is notable. In this the entablature with its modillioned cornice returns on itself from pilaster to colonnette, instead of carrying also across the front from one colonnette to the other. No tympanum either appears to support the likewise modillioned raking cornice of the pedimented roof with resulting effect of structural weakness. Square spindles form the back of a seat carried by a colonnette and its pilaster on either side. This entrance feature and the major portion of the house can be ascribed to late eighteenth century. This house is constructed entirely of frame which is sheathed in 6 inch wide clapboards.

Bibliography:

Somerset County Deed Books

Field books and drawings of the survey

*Lewis D. Cook*

Supervising Historian

Approved:

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